

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SCCT-01 AID-05 OPR-02 A-01

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O R 072120Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9829

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 0096

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, JM

SUBJECT: POLITICAL VIOLENCE FLARES IN KINGSTON GHETTO

1. THE MOUNTING CYCLE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE SECTION OF THE KINGSTON GHETTO KNOWN AS THE "CONCRETE JUNGLE" ERUPTED INTO A FULL-FLEDGED RIOT DURING THE EVENING OF JANUARY 6. AT LEAST ONE CIVILIAN HAS BEEN KILLED BY GUNFIRE, AND MANY OTHERS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED. FIRE BOMBING BROKE OUT SHORTLY AFTER DUSK IN THE NO-MAN'S LAND AREA BETWEEN THE WARRING JLP AND PNP FACTIONS. MANY HOMES AND STORES WERE BURNT TO THE GROUND AS THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WAS PREVENTED FROM ENTERING THE AREA BECAUSE OF GUN FIRE, AND BARRICADES ERECTED BY THE RIOTERS.

2. TWO POLICEMEN GUARDING SOME BURNT-OUT STORES WERE KILLED BY AUTOMATIC FIRE, AND ANOTHER WOUNDED EARLIER TODAY ACCORDING TO POLICE SOURCES. NEWS OF THE
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POLICE KILLINGS HAS SPREAD QUICKLY THROUGH TOWN AND THE

JCF REPORTEDLY IS IN A TOUGH HEAD-BASHING MOOD.

3. THE FIGHTING IS CONCENTRATED ON THE BORDER BETWEEN THE SOUTH ST. ANDREW CONSTITUENCY OF HOUSING MINISTRY "TONY" SPAULDING AND SOUTH-WEST ST. ANDREW CONSTITUENCY OF OPPOSITION M.P. WILTON HILL. THE MAJOR COMBATANTS ARE THE REMA GANG (JLP) AND THE GARRISON GANG (PNP). REMA REPORTEDLY IS UNDER THE CONTROL OF JLP SENATOR PEARNE CHARLES, WHO IS SLATED TO BE THE JLP CANDIDATE FOR HILL'S SEAT IN THE NEXT ELECTION. GARRISON IS UNDER THE PERSONAL CONTROL OF SPAULDING.

4. MINISTER NATIONAL SECURITY KEBLE MUNN TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE JANUARY 6 THAT THE ATTACKS TAKING PLACE WERE "MOTIVATED AND DIRECTED AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT". HE SAID HE SAW NO NEED AT THE MOMENT TO DECLARE A STATE OF EMERGENCY HOWEVER.

5. ACCORDING TO THE MINISTER, THE SECURITY FORCES HAVE UNCOVERED INFORMATION IN RECENT WEEKS ABOUT THE STORAGE OF GUNS AND AMMUNITION, AND THE TRAINING OF PEOPLE TO USE THE WEAPONS. ONE GROUP NAMED THE YAPP FIGHTERS ORGANIZATION, WHICH NUMBERS OVER 30, HAD BEEN UNCOVERED AND 16 OF ITS MEMBERS HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO POLICE CUSTODY. ASKED TO WHICH PARTY THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP BELONGED. MUNN REPLIED THAT "ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT THEY ARE PERSONS WHO ARE AFFILIATED WITH THE OPPOSITION." HE SAID THE GROUP WAS BEING TRAINED TO USE GUNS AND MAKE BOMBS. HE ADDED THAT THE TRAINING OPERATION WAS "TOTALLY JAMAICAN-ORIENTED" AS FAR AS HE KNEW.

6. COMMENT: NO ONE POLITICAL PARTY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT VIOLENCE; FACTIONS OF BOTH ARE GUILTY. THE "CONCRETE JUNGLE" IS, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE, THE MOST POLITICALLY VOLATILE SECTION OF THE ISLAND. SOCIO-ECONOMIC UNREST IS ENDEMIC AND REVOLVES AROUND NOT SO MUCH THE SIZE OF THE PIE, BUT WHO GETS ANY AT ALL. WHEN THE JLP WAS IN POWER IT PACKED ITS SUPPORTERS INTO NEW PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECTS LIKE TIVOLI AND WILTON GARDENS. SINCE COMING TO POWER THE PNP HAS DONE THE SAME, ERECTING

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SCHEMES LIKE ARNETT GARDENS, WHICH ARE PACKED WITH ITS PARTY FAITHFUL. THESE ISLANDS OF FERVENT POLITICAL SUPPORT ARE ONLY SEPARATED BY BANDS OF ASPHALT WHICH SERVE AS BOUNDARIES, BATTLE-LINES AND INCIDENTALLY AS STREETS.

7. WHILE MOST GOJ OFFICIALS PLEAD IGNORANCE OF THE CAUSES OF THE CURRENT FIGHTING, THE EMBASSY IS INCLINED

TO BUY THE EXPLANATION OFFERED BY ONE SENIOR POLICE OFFICIAL, WHO UNTIL RECENTLY COMMANDED THE JCF IN THE EMBATTLED AREA. PERNEL CHARLES BEGAN AGGRESSIVELY ORGANIZAING THE S.W. ST. ANDREW CONSTITUENCY SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. THE PNP, CONCERNED BY HIS ADVANCES, ATTEMPTED TO COUNTER CHARLES' EFFORT BY USING THE GARRISON GANG TO INTIMIDATE HIS SUPPORTERS THROUGH BEATINGS, HOUSE-WRECKINGS AND SHOOTINGS. APPEALS FOR POLICE ACTION WENT LARGELY UNANSWERED AS TONY SPAULDING EXTENDED POLITICAL PROTECTION TO HIS GARRISON GANG THUGS. CHARLES, WHO IS SOMEWHAT OF A THUG IN HIS OWN RIGHT, THEN BEGAN TO RETALIATE IN KIND AND THE SPIRAL OF VIOLENCE HAS ESCALATED UPWARDS EVER SINCE.

8. TO RESTORE ORDER P.M. MANLEY WILL HAVE TO COMMIT THE JCF AND JDF IN THE AREA. SO FAR THEY HAVE TENDED TO BE OBSERVERS ATTEMPTING TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE RIOTING OUTSIDE THE "CONCRETE JUNGLE". MANLEY'S HESITANCY TO ACT FIRMLY IS RUMORED TO STEM FROM THE FEAR, PROBABLY WELL FOUNDED, THAT THE JCF AND JDF WOULD END UP KILLING A NUMBER OF PEOPLE, INCLUDING PNP SUPPORTERS, AND THAT THE LEFT-WING OF HIS OWN PARTY WOULD TURN ON HIM AND ACCUSE HIM OF "LEVELING THE GUNS ON THE MASSES".
GERARD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL DISORDERS, POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976KINGST00096
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760005-0848
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760180/aaaactft.tel
Line Count: 140
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <20 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL VIOLENCE FLARES IN KINGSTON GHETTO
TAGS: PINS, PINT, JM, PNP, JLP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006